

# Collaborative Intelligence : Office Politics

Office politics are becoming a major stumbling block to business effectiveness. According to a recent study ([Ipsos-Reid – Nov. 2007](#)) instances where office politics obstructed productivity have almost double in the last ten years ago. Although this study was carried out in Canada similar results were discovered in the UK business sector. We can only assume that the issue is prevalent across most developed countries.

As we move from the 'command and control' model within businesses there are some adjustments to be made. Getting someones cooperation is not a matter of whether they report to you or not. Often as not you have no official 'power' over the other person from whom you need help. Being able to influence people has suddenly become very important.

[Emotional Intelligence](#) is the skill of using emotions as a source of information about the social environment. EQ is quickly becoming a desired skill within flattened organizations. However EQ and IQ are necessary but no longer sufficient to enable people to adapt to the 'new workplace'. You probably know where I'm going with this – we need to develop our '[CQ](#)' – Collaborative Intelligence.

I realize that's a tall order and that you may require some assistance that is a little more uh..immediate. So for those of you in need of 'office politics first aid' here is a link to '[How To Win at Office Politics](#)' courtesy of BNET.

Everyone who has to work in an office environment also has to deal with the politics of that place. Dealing with difficult people also becomes part of that process – which is why I will be posting about difficult people, politics and CQ in subsequent days. Meanwhile stay calm and play nice even if

others don't know how to do that yet.

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# Collaborative Intelligence & Growing Effective Workteams



Imagine this – you arrive to work on Monday morning and find that your team has won the right to handle the company's most important client. As a result the team will be expanded to deal with the extra workload.

There is already a huge list of well qualified and high quality applicants for the expansion – your team has the 'pick of the litter' because everyone in the company knows your team develops their people to their highest potential.

Mondays are a great day of the week for your high performing team. Members arrive refreshed from the week-end and look forward to meeting up for another challenging but rewarding week. There is a palpable sense of clarity and focus on the team objectives. Balanced with a playful approach to learning something new everyday and towards overcoming the evitable set backs and challenges. By the end of the week you know that team will be a little wiser, a little stronger and the sense of community a little deeper than before.

Then the alarm clock goes off. And you awake to your real world. And it is Monday morning and you have had such a lovely

dream you were sad to leave it. Ahead of you is the commute, the pile of 'stuff' that will greet you when you get to work. The silent, trudging along, colleagues trying to conceal their quiet desperation about another Monday morning and a week ahead of sporadic at best, team-work.

There will be the evitable 'crises during the week leaving you feeling physically and emotionally spent by the weeks end (or even earlier). A good portion of your week-end is spent 'recovering' from the effects of the week. Rinse and repeat.

What distinguishes these two scenarios? Simple – [collaborative team work](#).

If building a collaborative team (one with high [Collaborative Intelligence](#)) was easy everyone would belong to one. That's the bad news. The good news is that with the right tools people can do to develop their team from the 'inside out'. Articles on ways to improve teamwork point to the fact that a great team never consists of an assembly of unmotivated and dysfunctional individuals.

'High Performing Team' (HPT) rule number one: HPTs are made up of well-developed individuals.

Conclusion: to grow great teams – grow great people

Training that grows people and teams in tandem is the secret of most successful organizations. You are frying two fish in the one pan. Beyond growing the individual the team requires a reason to exist and know its prime function. High performing teams are self-aware.

'High Performing Team' (HPT) rule number two: HPTs are very aware of what their team 'does'. The role it plays in the overall success of the business or organization.

Conclusion: to get the best out of your team provide them with a challenging but achievable objective and never let them

forget their role in the overall success of the enterprise.

A literature review on employee motivation provides some insights about how employees become motivated and part of a cohesive team.

1. They like to be treated as human beings – not parts of a big machine
2. They want to know that their work is appreciated
3. They like to know how their contribution fits into serving 'greater good' of the company
4. They want to have input into how their work is done
5. They want a sense of community – one to which they belong that they provide support for and in turn provides support them, when they need it.

How difficult is it to provide these things in the workplace? Well it doesn't have to be 'rocket surgery'. There is a seven point system that paves the way toward that high performing team you visited in your dream at the beginning of this article. It is presented in a series of questions:

- A) What are the shared assumptions your team is using to generate the 'team-effect' they presently have?
- B) What does your team think is possible?
- C) What would it take for you and your colleagues to develop a deeper trust of each other?
- D) Is leadership concentrated in a small number of the team?
- E) What would it take to have that leadership spread throughout the entire team?
- F) What changes in the culture of your workplace would have to take place for your team to be able to function more like a network and less like a hierarchy?

These are not easy questions and creating a high performance team is not always an easy process but it must start somewhere. These questions can act as a catalyst to conversations within your team that can have far-reaching implications.

Articles on ways to improve teamwork frequently imply that personal development has no place in the workplace. This is a delusion – you cannot develop an employee in a sustainable way professionally, without helping them to grow personally.

A literature review on employee motivation often displays approaches toward employees as troops being sent into battle, rather than people who have personal as well as professional aspirations. A more rounded view of employees enables us to grow high performance teams that are connected and effective at many levels.

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## **Collaborative Leadership: The World is Bumpy**

How long can the 'command and control' methods of the late 20th Century continue to have value within business?

It is becoming increasingly obvious that running things with many layered, and expensive, chains of command is failing. Information flows in two main directions within a organization. Top-down and Bottom-Up. The transition from hierarchy to network is taking place but the pace of change will have to accelerate. Increasingly I bump into leader who are at their wits end trying to keep their team responsive to the rate of change in the market place and society in general.

Here are just some of the changes (ref: Thomas L. Friedman's 'The World is Flat'):

1. Fall of the Berlin Wall – tilting the world toward free markets
2. Netscape IPO – creating a massive investment in fiber-optic cables (connection!)
3. Work flow software – enabling people from all over the world to collaborate on-line
4. Open-Sourcing – free software creating massive collaborative and self-organizing communities
5. Outsourcing – the migration of business functions to third world countries
6. Off-shoring – the proliferation of contract manufacture to China
7. Supply-chaining – the development of resilient networks of to achieve business efficiencies between retailers , suppliers and customer demand (e.g. Wal mart)
8. In-sourcing – logistics companies (e.g. UPS) enabling small companies act big through enhanced distribution networks
9. In-forming – the growth of information on the net e.g. the emergence of 'Google'
10. Wireless – further enhancing the effect IT is having on business collaboration, personalization and mobility accelerated

Friedman goes on in his book to admit that the world really isn't 'flat'. It made for a great title. The field is very much tilted toward those parts of the world that can afford the technology and so forth, required to make the advances he talks about.

One of the most publicized factors in the 'flattening process' is outsourcing – and yet how this will play out is not clear.

I'd prefer to call the world 'bumpy' and it's only going to get 'bumpier' as time passes – the inequalities that underpin the world economy are going to jeopardize the fantastic world Friedman envisages.

...and yes you've guessed it – I think we need to exercise a deeper more profound degree of collaboration to make the transition into a 'flatter' world.

A video about the 'other side' of outsourcing.

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## **Collaborative Intelligence: Mastery**

' Without learning about the business, as well as their own tasks, employees cannot make the contributions that they are capable of. This requires dramatic learning efforts, both for the employees who must learn to act in the interest of the whole enterprise, and for the senior managers who must learn how to extend mastery and self-determination throughout the organization.'

Peter Senge [The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook]

Here Peter talks about 'sustainability'.

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## **Collaborative Intelligence: Competition is OverRated**

[Howard Rheingold](#) agrees with me (well that's a relief) competition is over-rated. [Social Darwinism](#)– the struggle to the top of the pile is not the only thing going on in natural

(including human) systems.

You only have to scratch the surface of ecologies in nature to find deep levels of cooperation. If it is not cooperation you find, it will be healthy levels of accommodation. Foxes, coyotes and wolves for example. Although man has often depicted these three creatures as highly competitive studies have shown that each them avoid bloodshed when ever possible. By carefully carving their stomping grounds into appropriate niches each 'dog' pretty much keeps to their own turf – avoiding bloody and unnecessary combat.

Howard Rheingold gave a very thoughtful talk on the topic of collaboration at TED. Here it is:

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## Thank You!

Thank you!

You should be receiving an email shortly on how to download your free ebook, '7 Easy Ways to Build Workplace Collaboration.'

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**Collaborative Intelligence :  
Socialtext brings Wiki**



# Mainstream

Made famous by the [Wikipedia](#) – wikis are becoming much more than just a way to store information. [Socialtext](#) has brought the **wiki** mainstream with the addition of [two new features](#). Increasingly organizations and business are having to adapt to the huge increase in information they must manage. Enterprise wikis are proving to be very effective at enabling teams and organizations coordinate their response to rapidly changing environments.



Because the wiki resembles the way the human mind works it can help us organize information intuitively. Wikis also represent one of the most powerful tools for enabling collaboration at all levels of human organization.

## Collaborative Intelligence

[It's all about Collaborative Intelligence for Sales, Marketing, and the Field!](#)

[Sales team Collaboration – not an oxymoron](#)

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# Collaborative Intelligence @ Work

[ManyOne.net](http://ManyOne.net) has just come to my attention. It is a very intriguing approach to how to up the ante for collaboration on the Internet. As I explored the site further I discovered that the [ManyOne](http://ManyOne.net) approach really has the potential to bring some 'civilization' to cyberspace.

If we consider for a moment that bacteria have been living in colonies for well over 2 billion years, ants 40 million and termites for 200 million it thought provoking that we have only been organizing ourselves in colonies for 40-60 thousand years. We're 'babes in the woods' as far as colony organization goes.

The Internet is the largest human colony on earth and I'm sure you would agree that it's still a bit like the 'Wild West' – wander into the wrong part of town and you can see lots of unsightly stuff.

Anything that enables us to develop our on-line community to reflect the positive and life-enhancing aspects of our terrestrial communities – has got to be a good thing.

I don't see this as a 'nice-to-have' development – I see this as a necessary step toward a sustainable future for our species.

I see [ManyOne.net](http://ManyOne.net) potentially making a great contribution to on-line culture along with:

[www.Worldchanging.com](http://www.Worldchanging.com)

[www.mindandlife.org](http://www.mindandlife.org)

[www.the\\_elders.org](http://www.the_elders.org)

[www.globalgiving.com](http://www.globalgiving.com)

[www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org)

[www.massivechange.com](http://www.massivechange.com)

**I'd love to hear from people about what they think about the ManyOne.net model.**

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## **Collaborative Intelligence: Getting Real**

Think about how much is not said in any marriage or relationship for fear of hurting the other person or disturbing the harmony of the relationship. Nearly all the “left-hand column” material that is edited out of each one-to-one relationship is complicated by multiple factors in the group – the number of individuals, the different sub-interest groups, past history, how people outside the group might react or be affected, and myriad assumptions, particularly about what will work or not work. Maybe it is more remarkable that we have any effective communication at all than it is that our communication isn't better.

On top of the above mentioned problems, there is the difficulty of even a good team maintaining its effectiveness in the face of new and more difficult challenges. After twenty years in the martial art of Aikido, I know I can still be “thrown” by certain circumstances. Just so, a team can be thrown by circumstances and lose its “center,” its sense of wholeness, and its members' ability to be authentic.

Why even astronauts lose their balance from time to time (actually that's a bit weird when you think of it – the dramatically lower gravity and all?.....).

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## **Collaborative Intelligence & Building Bridges**

Developing collaborative intelligence (CQ) is about developing our ability to work together. Whether it is a business team or a community or even nations, creating new way to increase our collaborative capacity will make life easier for everyone.

For example the videos of groups of people singing the national anthems of other nations makes a great point about building bridges. How can we build bridges in the workplace? what sort of 'grand gestures' can we provide to others to show our intent on cooperation and collaboration?

[Pangeaday](#) is a an event that will focus the worlds attention on what people can create together.